THREE INDIAN TALES

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Three Indian tales

Tales of Foreign Lands.

A Series of Stories for the Young.

COLLECTED BY

REV. JOSEPH SPILLMANN, S. J.

VOL. VI.

THREE INDIAN TALES.

SECOND EDITION.

ST. LOUIS, MO. 1903.
Published by B. HERDER,
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NAMAMEHA AND WATOMILKA,

BY

Alexander Baumgartner, S. J.

TAHKO, THE YOUNG INDIAN MISSIONARY,

BY

A. V. B.

FATHER RENÉ'S LAST JOURNEY,

BY

Anton Huonder, S. J.

Translated from the German

BY

Miss Helena Long.

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CONTENTS.

FIRST TALE.

Namameha and Watomilka.

		Page
I.	The Loghouse by the Lake	9
II.	The Sudden Attack	14
III.	Among the Indians	17
IV.	Namameha	21
V.	Watomilka	26
VI.	The Dream	30
VII.	The Buffalo Hunt	36
VIII.	The Flight	42

SECOND TALE.

Tahko, the Young Indian Missionary.

I.	The Return Home and the Disappointment	49
II.	A Great Resolution	58
III.	A Fortunate Meeting	64
IV.	Joyous Prospects	80
V.	Great Losses and Great Gains	85

THIRD TALE.

Father René's Last Journey. 105

FIRST TALE.

NAMAMEHA AND WATOMILKA,

BY

Alexander Baumgartner, S. J.

I.

The Loghouse near the Lake.

A missionary — Fr. Prando, S. J. — who travelled from Italy to America in order to convert the poor Indians, told us in one of his letters a very beautiful and true story. We are now going to tell it to you, not in the few brief words which the missionary wrote, but more in detail so that our young friends may read it with pleasure.

Close by the Rocky lake stood the lonely loghouse of a French settler, who about the time of the great revolution emigrated across the wide ocean to North America. It was a very simple building made out of the trunks of trees which rested horizontally one on the other, and were securely fastened with wedges into perpendicular posts, the interstices of which were filled up with moss to keep out the cold winds and make the house warm and comfortable for the winter. At the time we are speaking of, which was about the beginning of August, the outer

walls were covered with the beautiful red-colored leaves of the wild vine and other climbing plants, from between which the small windows looked out upon a garden planted partly with flowers and partly with the ordinary vegetables of our European gardens. Round this habitation a strong rampart of pointed stakes stood prominent; before it lay a deep moat supplied with water from a neighboring rivulet which emptied itself into the lake not far from the little height on which the loghouse stood. All around this enclosure were to be seen fields which the settler had cleared within the last three years from the wooded banks of the lake. Here grew quantities of fine maize — a superior kind of Indian corn — and that not to be despised bulbous root, the potato, which the English explorer, Francis Drake, brought with him from America to Europe for the nourishment of so many thousands of our poor. It had cost Mr. Leblanc much hard labor to clear this rugged tract of ground from the forest of primeval growth which still stretched itself along the lake and the plantation. There was a similar clearing with another

planter's house in the dim distance on the opposite bank of the lake. There were also other settlements around, but they were for the most part, a mile and a half or three miles distant from each other, and, about twelve miles off, a fort had been erected for the protection of the settlers. From this fort small divisions of troops were constantly ranging in all directions so as to keep the Dakotas in check who, after a long and desperate war, had retreated from that part and taken up their abode in the forest on the western side, but who from time to time made furious attempts to drive away the white men.

Mr. Leblanc was a brave man and he did not fear these savages, but he took all the necessary precautions for the protection of his family and home; he kept up a constant friendly intercourse with the neighboring settlers and with the fort, and from year to year increased and improved his beautiful estate. His wife and child, the little Marie, were at first somewhat timid in the silence and loneliness of the forest — so near to the wild and cruel Indians. But when three years had passed peacefully by, they gradually

lost all fear. Twice the Indians had even come quite in a friendly spirit to the farm and offered furs for sale—skins of beavers, otters and other animals, and asked only a reasonable price for them.

The planter wholly absorbed in examining and counting the skins, and settling for the payment of them, did not notice that two of the savages were restlessly spying about the premises, apparently measuring with their eyes the door and windows, the height of the palisade, the breadth of the moat etc. and whispering to each other unintelligible words in their own language, then walking to and fro in the garden, only returning to the gate when the old Indian, having concluded the bargain, called them and showed them their share. Mr. Leblanc suspecting nothing, and well pleased with his purchase, went back to his wife and child, whilst the Indians leaping upon their horses, soon disappeared in the darkness of the forest.

"I want to ride!" said little Marie, when she saw how the Indians took their children on their horses with them; "Mama, let me ride too!"

The planter could not help laughing at this fancy of his dear little one; but the mother was grieved to see that Marie was becoming as wild and restless as a boy. And now when her mother would not hear anything about riding, the little girl became very angry, she pouted and said: "I want to be an Indian too."

II.

The Sudden Attack.

Little Marie's wish was destined to be fulfilled in a very sad way. Two days had passed since the last visit of the Indians. Everything was going on as usual. Mr. Leblanc was busily engaged clearing a fresh piece of the forest. All day long the dull thud of the axe resounded along the lake and became still more muffled as it echoed back from the opposite woods. Now and then a great crash announced the fall of a tree. It would have been too dangerous to effect the clearing by setting fire to the wood on account of the dwelling house being so near.

Marie was really a good-hearted child, so after weeping for a while, she submitted dutifully to her mother's decision that she was not to ride, but to help her in the household duties. "Yes, Mama," said she, "I have been naughty but I will be good now and stay with you." And she went

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cheerfully with her mother to the storeroom and stretched out her little arms to receive the packages which her mother handed down to her. Then she followed her into the kitchen and brought the chips of wood and placed them in readiness to make the fire, and thus she helped her mother during the whole day.

The two next days passed in like manner, but the following night they were all awoke out of their first sleep by the terrible cry: "Up! up! the Indians!"

They had scarcely had time to throw on their clothes, when a swarm of Indians, uttering wild and savage cries, penetrated into the peaceful settlement; set fire to the barn, and began to attack the door of the homestead. Unutterable terror seized the poor inmates. There was no possibility of sending anyone to the next settlement to raise an alarm. The planter grasped his gun in desperation and stood before the door determined if possible to defend his family, whilst the servants also took up arms and placed themselves at the windows; the terrified mother wrung her hands in

desolation and she and her child prayed fervently for help.

A shot struck the foremost Indian to the ground. The others recoiled for a moment from the door. But before Leblanc could load again a shower of arrows whizzed through the open window and, struck by one of these poisoned darts, he fell lifeless to the ground. The servants succeeded in avenging the death of their master, for they shot down several of the Indians; but the others with fearful yells only advanced the more savagely, burst open the doors, and uttering their terrible war-cry, plundered the dwelling-house and slaughtered all its inhabitants. The poor weeping child who clung tightly to the corpse of her mother, alone was saved. One of the Indians was already brandishing his tomahawk over her head, when the chief threw himself between them, snatched the child from the dead body of her mother, took her with the remainder of the spoil on his horse and rode off with her into the dark and fearful forest, which the bright flames of the blazing settlement made to look still more awful.

III.

Among the Indians.

Little Marie never thought her wish to ride and to become an Indian would be fulfilled in such a dreadful way. There she was like a defenseless lamb amongst these cruel wolves. She did not understand a word the Indian said to her, and he did not appear to understand her lamentations. More dead than alive she rested in front of him on the saddle against his left arm whilst he curbed his horse with the right. When she came to herself again, her cries were enough to melt a stone. Trembling in every limb she looked up at the fierce chief and he tried to quiet her; but his appearance was nothing less than dreadful with the waving feather ornament, the fluttering tuft of hair, the ill-favored dusky face, and what he said sounded more like the howling of a wild beast than the speech of a human being, and the poor child could not control her outbursts of grief and terror.

They rode on thus for a great many miles and towards day-break arrived at a clearing in the forest where they halted. The savage lifted little Marie from the horse and, taking a piece of Indian corn-cake and a dried fish from his hunter's pouch gave them to her. The poor child felt the deepest repugnance for the rude unsavory food, but hunger at last conquered her aversion and she ate the rough, burnt and blackened corn-cake. In the meantime the horse also was fed. The other Indians came up soon after and took their morning meal. Then they all rode on farther and farther into the forest until they came to a similar but much more extensive clearing.

There stood about twenty miserable hovels constructed of perpendicular posts placed in a circle in the ground and wattled with branches and the bark of trees. Thick smoke issuing from a great many of them, and on the open spaces between these wigwams, several fires were blazing around which some half-naked children lay, whilst their mothers baked their corn-cakes. Other children came creeping out of the holes which served as entrances to the huts.

As the horses came galloping in, a loud and joyful cry arose. The Indians flung down from their horses the booty which they had brought with them, in particular the still bleeding scalps of the white men whom they had killed.

Poor little Marie was still in an agony of fear. She called for her father and mother and prayed Almighty God and our Blessed Lady to help her; but the savages did not understand what she said. She was half fainting from grief and terror when the chief lifted her from the horse and placed her on the ground before one of the huts. The Indian women and children came out of curiosity and looked at the trembling little white girl, who was crying and trying to hide herself from them. Savages as they were, a kind of pity seemed to move them. They made a little bed in one of the huts and laid her down to rest.

Meanwhile buffalo hides were spread out on the ground in a wide circle. The Indian riders freed themselves of their weapons, bows, arrows, hunting-knives and tomahawks, and lay down on the skins upon the ground. A great pipe was lighted, each

one took a whiff and passed it on. Those who had been engaged in the night attack, related their terrible adventures. The others broke out from time to time into loud shouts of joy. At length the booty was divided. The little white girl whom they had brought away a prisoner, was, in accordance with the wishes of the greater number of them, to be put to death, but the chief frowned fiercely upon these barbarians and claimed the child as his own share.

All opposition was silenced when grasping the tomahawk at his side, he swung it in a threatening manner three times in the air as a sign that he would if necessary enforce his will by the use of this weapon. He explained to them that he intended to bring the child up with his own children, and when she grew up to give her to one of his sons for a wife. From this time forth she was to be called Namameha.

IV.

Namameha.

The child was no longer called Marie, but Namameha. The poor little girl, as the result of all the fear and anguish, and the grief and agitation of that dreadful night, fell into a high fever. She lay for many days between life and death. In her delirium she often called out: "Papa, let me ride!" Then she cried out again suddenly: "Mother, are you dead? . . . O mother, mother! I will be good! I will never disobey you any more — Jesus! Mary! Joseph! have pity on me!" Then she would laugh and say: "O give me the pretty little dress and feather ornament!" For six long days the unhappy child spoke or dreamed and prayed thus.

Watowala, the chief's wife had made her a little bed with buffalo skins, wool and moss, and had bathed her forehead from time to time with cold water, and watched beside her almost night and day. Much as

she hated white people, she pitied this helpless child, she herself did not know why. Surely protecting angels must have been watching over the poor forsaken little one, who loved our dear Lord and His blessed Mother so tenderly!

As the fever did not abate, the woman went to one of the Jossakeeds, that is sorcerers, and asked him to come and see what could be done for their poor prisoner. He came with his medicine bag—a great leather bag made of otter skins. In it were all sorts of roots, yarrow, balm, mint, the rattles of the rattle snake, monkeys' teeth and various kinds of herbs. He first danced frantically round the hut, then he stepped inside, blew in the face of the sick maiden, took a piece of charcoal, drew a figure on a piece of wood which was intended to represent the illness, took his knife and pierced the piece of wood and then threw it on the fire. But the fever was not gone, on the contrary it had increased.

During all this time of delirium the girl continued to pray as before. Little by little the fever left her and she gradually recovered. Although at this time she

would have been very glad if the good God had taken her to Himself in heaven, there to meet her dear parents again, still at length she grew accustomed to her fate. When she was restored to health everything appeared to her like a frightful dream. Watowala was so kind that she had faith in her. She drank the milk and ate the corn-cakes which her Indian foster-mother brought her. She soon learnt a few words of the Indian language and was able to make herself understood by Watowala. When she was quite strong again, the Indian children came and played with her, and called her Namameha. In vain she told them that her name was Marie—not Namameha. They continued to call her by that name and in time she became accustomed to it.

She often wandered about in copse and wood with the other children, ran after cockchafers and butterflies, looked for birds' nests, or caught birds in traps. Then she would imitate her companions when they climbed trees, or threw themselves into the water when they came to a lake and taught themselves to swim. Thus she became

strong and healthy, but wilder than ever. The clothes which she had on when she came were already torn to pieces with the thorns; so she wore a little frock made of skins. Her complexion grew darker. Lines had been made on her cheeks and these had been filled in with coal-dust. She looked very ugly now, but the Indians liked her appearance much better.

As soon as Namameha had learnt to speak the language, she far-outstripped the other children. She understood and retained everything much better than they. She learnt to make the corn-cakes which the Indians use as bread, to roast, grind and cook the maize — also to prepare from the sap of the birch a beverage which they drink on feast days, to gather and dry the tobacco leaves and to prepare the skins of animals for clothes, and indeed all else that fell to the duty of the women and girls to do. She was so clever at all this that the others highly esteemed her and the chief loved her as if she were his own child. But well as she was cared for she had no one who could speak to her of God; there was no church and no prayers, no priests and no

books. Every morning and evening the poor forlorn child knelt and said an "Our Father," a "Hail Mary" and the "Creed": these were the only prayers she knew. But God protected and preserved her from all the dark superstition of the Indians.

V.

Watomilka.

When Namameha grew up the chief gave her to his eldest son, who was called the "Brown Bear," as his wife. There was a great feast when the wedding took place, but a still greater feast was kept when Namameha gave birth to a little boy and he was named Watomilka.

After the custom of the Indian women or squaws, as they were called there, Namameha made a cradle for her baby out of buffalo leather which she carefully stretched on a wooden frame. She placed a bed of soft fur or down upon it, and in it the child was laid and warmly covered with a choice fur and secured by leather straps. There was also a plaited hood to protect it from the sun and rain; in this kind of cradle Namameha carried her little one fastened by a strap to her own head, and thus was he conveyed from one encampment to another and to all the hunts, fêtes, meetings, and

robbing expeditions, till he was able to walk alone.

Namameha had never seen anyone baptized, so she was not able to baptize her dear child. But she made the sign of the cross on his forehead every night and morning as she commended him to the good God, beseeching Him to lead the boy with her to Christians, that he might be preserved from the vices of the Indians, and one day go to dwell with Him in heaven.

As the child grew older and learnt to speak, she explained to him the meaning of the sign of the cross and spoke to him about Almighty God, the Divine Redeemer and His blessed Mother. She also taught him all the prayers she knew—the "Our Father," the "Hail Mary", and the "Creed."

Thus prayed this forlorn mother and her child to the true God in the midst of these idolatrous and superstitious Indians. She wanted to lead her husband, the chief, to the knowledge of the true God, but he believed steadfastly in all the Jossakeeds, the sorcerers, said and therefore refused to listen to anything about our dear Lord. The God whom he worshipped was the

Great Spirit, which he represented to himself as a gigantic bird which had come down from heaven and had covered the earth with its wings. The Indians believed that when this spirit was angry it lightened and when it thundered it was in consequence of its flapping its wings; they also believed the earth to be only an egg which had been laid by this god in the primeval days, or the first ages. Further, they believed this bird had brought fire to the earth, and so in commemoration of that event they light their pipes in his honor: "Great Spirit! Come down to me and smoke the pipe of friendship with me! Fire and earth smoke with me, and help me to destroy my enemies! My dogs and horses also smoke with me!"

Thus prayed the Indian chief whilst his wife invoked the true God; for he thought of nothing but hunting and war and the destruction of his enemies. This was a great grief to Namameha because war was carried on with extreme cruelty. Every enemy was killed and scalped. She was more especially grieved when one day the tribe to which she belonged suddenly attacked a company of white men who were

conducting a number of wagons and were going out to found a new settlement. The cunning savages were soon on their track and following them stealthily, hid themselves behind a range of hills, and then came upon them suddenly one night just as they had fallen asleep peacefully in their little encampment. Vainly Namameha hoped to save them. All were remorselessly slaughtered.

VI.

The Dream.

The "Brown Bear" was very pleased with his wife. She worked more industriously than any of the other Indian women, she kept the hut beautifully clean, baked the best maize-bread and knew how to dress the skins better than any other squaw. Whilst the others were often impatient, peevish and unhappy, she was always as patient and resigned as if she were only a slave who had been born to hard work. The "Brown Bear" forgave her therefore when she took no part in the cruel feasts in which the captured enemies were tortured to death, but always found something to do in the hut so as to avoid seeing such a sad spectacle. He did not interfere with her when she prayed, and he was not offended when she would not take any of the sorcerer's remedies.

But the boy Watomilka was in accordance with his father's express wish, to be

brought up a real Indian, wild, fierce, bloodthirsty, a furious warrior and a terror to all his enemies. Even whilst he was an infant, he was laid on a bear's skin and his father invoked the Great Spirit thus: "Great Spirit! Let the strength of the bear pass into the boy's body, let his arms become as bears' claws, that he may be able to crush the bones of his enemies and bring their scalps home to his hut!"

As the boy grew older his father brought him squirrels, birds and other small animals, in order that he might torment them as the other Indian children did and so get accustomed to acts of cruelty. The boys pulled out the wings of the poor birds, cut the feet off the squirrels with a scalp knife and then cut off their legs piece by piece and lastly stabbed them repeatedly till they died in the greatest agony. Then they besmeared their faces with the blood, tore the skins off the animals and fastened them as scalps in their own particular part of their hut. The more of such scalps a boy had, the prouder he was. The elder children had to help to torture the captured enemies to death, to stab them, burn them, cut off their fingers

and toes and mock and taunt them in their sufferings.

The little Indians took great delight in these cruel sports, but not so little Watomilka. His mother had told him that the Great Spirit of the Christians created both men and animals, and that it grieved Him when anyone tortured them. Watomilka was gentle and kind-hearted like his mother. He would neither chop off the beautiful bushy tails of the squirrels nor tear out the wings of the poor birds. His father was very vexed about this, because he was afraid his son would never be a brave man, and would expose his name to ridicule. So he took the boy away from his mother and gave him to another family to be brought up more in accordance with his wishes.

This was a great grief to Namameha, but she was powerless to hinder it. She therefore commended her child to the All-merciful God and tried to submit to her fate as well as she could. The wicked woman into whose care Watomilka was given, often beat him because he was not so barbarous as the other children and would not torture animals. But it made no difference in him.

On the other hand he was foremost of all in running, climbing and swimming and was so big and strong, so brave and clever that they all learnt to respect and value him. His father even changed his opinion about his being a coward. Still he would not let him go back to his mother. The "Brown Bear" was very stern with poor Namameha, he made her work hard and she had, like the rest of the Indian women, to drag heavy bundles of hay and rice for miles at a time.

Now the Indians believe that the age of fourteen is the most important and decisive one in the whole of one's life, and that upon the dreams a boy has at that age his whole future career will depend. In these dreams they believe will appear to him the guardian spirit which will direct him throughout his life and entirely control his destiny. Now in order to have these dreams every boy has to go and shut himself up in a small hut in the wilderness and there fast and dream for over a month, until at length his guardian spirit, generally under the form of some animal, appears to him. At one time it is a beaver, at another a wild cat, a weasel or a bear. When the

boy has seen his guardian or protecting spirit he must go and hunt until he has killed whatever animal appeared to him in his dream. The skin of this animal is then looked upon as the most powerful means of protection in all the dangers of life, and the youth obtains through its means the distinctive qualities of this animal: he becomes nimble as a weasel, formidable as a bear, strong as a buffalo, etc.

So Watomilka was obliged to go and fast in the wilderness. He was shut up in a dark hut and got nothing to eat until after sunset, when he had only a few hard roots and some water. He lay the whole day long on a mat trying to dream as he had been bidden. Every day he became weaker and more low-spirited, and fell at last into that half-stupified state in which the others were accustomed to dream. But no bear, beaver, eagle or crow appeared to him. He dreamed constantly of the white men his mother had told him about, who lived far away in the land where the sun rises, and they seemed to him to resemble that luminary, so bright and beautiful were they. They came in great canoes across the sea,

and as they advanced the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled in such terrible peals that the whole forest seemed to quake, which so terrified the *redskins* that they ran away frightened. These wonderful white men landed, cleared large tracts of the forest and converted them into beautiful fields. He thought he saw all that; for Namameha had described it all to him so vividly in times past. Whilst the other Indians ran back into the forest frightened, he stayed with the white men and smoked the pipe of peace with them. Such was the dream of Watomilka.

VII.

The Buffalo Hunt.

When the boy had fasted and dreamed thirty-six days, his father came to the hut and wanted to know what kind of dream he had had, and under the form of what animal his protecting spirit had appeared to him. But how astounded and angry he was when Watomilka told him he had seen no animal, but only the white men who come from the land where the sun rises. He became quite furious on hearing the youth enthusiastically describe the settlement of the white men, and, in his first outburst of rage, he was almost ready to run him through with his spear.

"So you saw no bear then?"

"No."

"No beaver?"

"No."

"No squirrel?"

"No."—Then the Indian asked rapidly after a whole string of other animals, and always received the same negative answer.

"Had the white men no animals with them?"

"No, but they killed buffalos with a tube out of which lightning came."

This appeased the incensed father, who was now convinced the buffalo was to be his son's protecting spirit and he was quite satisfied with his protector. For he hoped Watomilka would be strong and warlike like this wild beast of the prairie. So it was an understood thing that Watomilka was to hunt a buffalo and gain for himself, by the possession of its skin, protection and help during the whole of his life. But from that day the "Brown Bear" took a great dislike to his wife and was undecided as to whether he should kill her or cast her off.

Before he made up his mind which he would do, he resolved to go out and hunt the buffalo with Watomilka which was to make him for the rest of his life a victorious warrior and the terror of all his enemies.

A vast number of these beasts roamed about in a valley situated not far from the colony of the Indians and only separated from it by a steep ridge of hills, which

enclosed it in a large circle by its rugged sharply indented heights. In the damp low ground of the valley, the grass grew almost to the height of a man. Buffalos are bigger than the strongest oxen and are more nimble than they, although the enormous head of the buffalo sits more heavily and awkwardly on its broad neck than that of an ox.

This time every member of the tribe was expected to go and witness the bravery of Watomilka. They commenced by setting fire here and there to the brushwood for a long way round and thus drove all the animals together into the middle of the circle. The Indians, desiring to be lighter and more nimble, did not wear their full war dress on this occasion, but only a short garment round their loins and the usual feather ornaments on their heads.

Some carried a bundle of javelins and a heavy spear, others bows and arrows. Thus equipped they rushed on their fleet steeds at a furious gallop into the centre of the valley. Watomilka rode his father's best horse and carried the best spear. Oh, what a fearful confusion it was! Driven out by

the fire, stupefied by the smoke, excited by the noise of the Indians, the buffalos ran with their heads bent down, by flocks in all directions; some running in between the riders, others roaring savagely at the horses. Their dull threatening roar resounded awfully over the valley. Several of the horses shied and reared and it was only by dint of wonderful dexterity on the part of their riders, that they could be restrained. Others which were already accustomed to battle, sprang neighing upon the shaggy monsters. Arrows whizzed, lances rushed through the air. The Indians wild and confused, shouted one against another. With marvelous security they guided their horses, provoked the buffalo, turned sharply whilst the animal with bent head rushed towards them, and brought down upon him the decisive blow from the side.

Watomilka slew the first buffalo which attacked him. Loud shouts of joy hailed his victory. The animal had rushed upon the forefeet of his horse, but at the same moment, he pierced him through with his spear and the powerful beast sank down groaning. Watomilka's father was how-

ever not so fortunate. Whilst he was in the act of raising his lance against one of the buffalos, in the confusion an arrow aimed by one of the other Indians, struck him in the back; he sank to the ground heavily wounded, and the enraged animal was just about to catch him on his horns, when Watomilka sprang forward and with one unerring stroke stretched the buffalo to the earth.

But it was too late. A few minutes afterwards Watomilka's father expired! The arrow had penetrated to his heart.

Cries of lamentation were intermingled with the shouts of victory. One of the strongest of the Indians lifted the body of the deceased "Brown Bear" on to his horse and bound him tightly on it. With subdued cries they pursued their way home. Namameha, who had no suspicion of the design which the dead man had cherished against her in his mind, received the corpse with a flood of tears. She forgot and forgave all the pain which he had caused her. But she resolved nevertheless on putting into execution at once a plan she had often thought over during her sufferings, and

had as frequently rejected, but which notwithstanding returned to her mind again and again and never failed to move her heart anew.

VIII.

The Flight.

"Will you flee with me?" said Namameha to her son, when in the evening the crowd of mourners had returned to their huts and they were alone with the dead body.

"Flee, Namameha? Where to?"

"To the white men whom you saw in your dream. They are the protecting spirits whom the Great Spirit has given you. I, your mother, am a white woman. Your father's father stole me out of the eastern land where the white men dwell. Let us go back to them."

"But who then will avenge my father's blood upon the hound who struck him with the arrow?"

"Leave vengeance to the Great Spirit who has no pleasure in the blood which we shed."

And the mother made the sign of the cross on his forehead. In silent wonderment Watomilka looked at her, stared at the

fire which was burning before the entrance of the hut, then looked once more on the painfully disfigured, wild, frightful countenance of his dead father.

At last, he looked up and said: "So be it! I will go with you where the Great Spirit calls us. But let us first sing my father's death song."

The death song was sung. On the next day the body was taken out into the forest and laid on a mat which was fastened to four posts. The scalps which the dead man had gathered together in his hut were laid beside him, in order that the spirits of these slaughtered enemies might, as the Indians believe, be his slaves in the other life. His weapons and amulets and also some food for the night, were laid at his side; for these savages believe the dead hunt in far-off lands during the day, but come back to their graves at night to eat and rest.

When all the honors with which the Indians are accustomed to bury their dead had been paid to the "Brown Bear," Watomilka saddled two horses in the middle of the night. Namameha mounted one and he the other. Then after taking leave of

the father's grave, they rode off into the forest towards the far-off land in the east.

Days and weeks passed. They had to force their way through thick woods and over foaming streams; yet they did not lose courage. After thirty days of wearisome travelling they reached the lake, and Namameha soon recognized the spot where she spent her earliest years. But there were no longer isolated farm houses to be seen; the place had grown into quite a village. There was a church and the blackrobe, viz: priest, dwelt amongst the white men.

Namameha sighed from a mixed feeling of joy and sorrow when she saw the spot again and thought of her dear lost parents. But the two travellers were very soon surrounded by a crowd of white people, curious to know who the new-comers were. How astounded they were when Namameha told them her adventures! Joyfully they took the fugitives with them and provided them with a little hut close by the lake. The priest came to see them and after having instructed Watomilka, administered to him the sacrament of holy Baptism. But as the youth showed signs of great intelligence,

the priest resolved to let him study in the hope that he might one day be able to preach the Gospel to the Indians. Marie—as Namameha was now again called—most gladly consented to this plan, and so at length, the boy Watomilka became a holy and zealous priest.

Second Tale.

Thako, The Young Indian Missionary,

BY

A. V. B.

I.

The Return Home and the Disappointment.

It was on the 15th of August in the year 1868 — the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin — that the three-masted barque St. Michael, belonging to the Russian whalefisher, Oronzow, after two years' absence, sailed into the harbor of Norton Sound, far up in the northwest of America. All the masts of the ship bore flags with colored pendants, and great was the joy amongst the sailors, when they caught sight of the coast with the little fort and the houses and cabins round about it; for they had almost given up all hope of ever seeing it again. Two years before, when they went off to the whale fishery, they got blocked in between great floating fields of ice in the Polar Sea, and there they were compelled to pass the winter, for it was not until the following summer that they succeeded in freeing their vessel and gaining the open sea. They

were now returning safely to St. Michael's Fort in the Norton Sound, richly laden with trainoil and even with ivory which they had found in the Siberian ice. But how amazed they were, when they no longer saw the Russian flag floating from the turret-spire of the little fortress, but the American starbanner in its stead! The whalefishers looked about in bewilderment and asked each other what could have happened in the settlement during their absence.

Among the crew, there was a darkbrown Indian boy, who testified his delight at the sight of his native coast, by shouting and capering about for joy. But when he saw the other sailors become all of a sudden grave and silent, he cried out: "Iwan! Feodor! Paul! why do you no longer smile?"

They shook their heads thoughtfully whilst they looked anxiously on the coast. The captain of the ship, however, a kind, pleasant-looking Russian laid his hand on the shoulder of the boy, who was still singing and dancing, and said: "Tahko, my son, I am afraid the Americans have either bought or taken away your native land and that we shall be obliged to separate."

"What!" exclaimed the Indian boy in alarm, "separate! Where are you going then?"

"If the Americans have bought Alaska, I must go back to Russia," explained the captain.

During this conversation the ship entered the little harbor; the boat was lowered into the sea, and the captain with a part of the sailors including the Indian boy, Tahko, rowed off to the coast. There they were received by a crowd of people who looked on the new-comers with amazement. Suddenly several voices cried out: "Surely that is Oronzow! That is the ship St. Michael which we all thought was lost! God be praised, they are safe!"

Captain Oronzow said in reply: "Yes, we are safe; but what has happened here?"

The new American Governor of the fort then came up to him, saluted him and informed him that the Americans had bought Alaska and that most of the Russians had left the settlement a short time ago and returned to Russia.

During this conversation no one thought of the Indian boy, Tahko. Directly after

he sprung from the boat on to the coast, he looked anxiously through the crowd as if seeking for some one. But when he did not see those whom he sought, he ran swiftly as a reindeer through the streets to the other end of the village to a little cabin, built of the bark of trees, which he knew well. As he neared the little habitation he saw at the first glance that it was deserted, for no smoke issued from the opening in the roof; the doors made of planks lay on the ground and no dog came forward to greet him with a friendly bark. Stupefied with astonishment, the poor boy stood before the empty hut of his parents; then, rushing in breathless from anxiety and grief, cried out loudly: "Takalag! father! mother!" When no answer came and all remained still, he threw himself on the ground and sobbed aloud in the wildest grief.

Some Indians came from the neighboring huts and said: "Boy, why are you shedding such bitter tears, and why do you hide your head like a wounded deer?"

At these questions Tahko got up and said: "Where is Takalag, my father, and Talahna, my mother?"

"What!" cried the Indians, "is Takalag your father? Why! you must be Tahko then? Yes, yes, it is he! He has come back from the sea. Poor Tahko! Your father and mother went away a long time ago, in their sledge towards the sun, the eye of day."

"How long is it since their dogs drew their sledge away?" asked Tahko of his fellow countrymen.

"The moon has twelve times opened and shut the eye of night since then" (i. e. twelve times have the new and full moon changed.)

"And where have they gone?" asked the boy again.

"They did not tell us; their sledge sunk from our eyes there behind those hills."

Tahko was silent, he held his head down and appeared to be thinking; then he raised himself up suddenly, and looking round to make sure that no white man was near said: "Why did my father leave this hut, which he loved so much, and which has only seen three times twelve moons since he built it?"

An old grey-haired Indian said: "When the new white faces with their smoking ships came here over a year ago, your father, Takalag was sent away out of the wigwam

of the 'great beards' (the Russians) and the 'great beards' went back again over the sea. But we did not understand the language of the new white faces, and they often got angry and drove us out of their wigwams. That annoyed your father, who is as proud as the grey king of the hills (the great bear) and as he thought you were dead and lost in the icefields of the northern spirit, he went away with your mother, Talahna who, being as timid as a young hare, was frightened at the new white faces."

At these words, and at the remembrance of his father and mother, the tears streamed from the poor forsaken boy's eyes; he turned away from the neighbors, sat himself down in the darkest corner of the hut and let his head sink on his breast.

This was the first great sorrow of his life. Four years ago he had come with his father and mother from the far east — from the unfruitful banks of the Inana river to the sea coast. Because whilst famine and sickness were filling the Indian village with dead bodies, news reached them that, far away in the west, the white faces with great

beards were giving the Indians good food in exchange for furs and stags' horns. Ten families of the Inana Indians set out, and had several months' hard travelling from the time they started away from the Rocky mountains in the direction of the Yukon river to the time they reached the Russian settlement of St. Michael on the Norton Sound. There they bartered skins very advantageously for flour and meat, settled down amongst the Russians and worked for their daily bread.

Even Tahko, who was not more than twelve years of age, and was Takalag's only son, was able to make himself useful. He worked for Captain Oronzow, felled wood for him in the forest and carried it home for him in his sledge. Oronzow was much pleased with the bright looking lad, and when he went off two years afterwards, to the whalefisheries in Behring's Straits and the Polar Sea, he took the boy with him. He promised his parents that he would watch over him as if he were his own son, and would make a clever whalefisher and sealhunter of him. So they let him go with Oronzow. But when for two long

years he did not return, they thought he must be dead and they went back sorrowfully to their old home on the banks of the Inana river.

Tahko now sat all alone amongst strangers thinking mournfully of the destruction of all his hopes. O how often, and how much he had rejoiced, during his long sojourn in the ice, in the thought of seeing his father and mother again; how carefully he watched for whales on the high seas! His sharp Indian eyes often discerned a whale which the other sailors would have let pass unnoticed; and each time Oronzow gave him a share in the booty for his discovery. Often during the journey Tahko looked with glistening eyes on the three barrels filled with whalebone and trainoil which he had already earned for himself and rejoiced in the thought of making them a present to his dear father and mother. But now all that was over. They would never enjoy his little treasure, and so he had no more pleasure in it. And what could he do all alone and forsaken? For a little while he remained sitting silently absorbed in his sad reflections.

The Indians looked upon him with sympathy. At last the old woman said: "Tahko, what will you do now?"

"I don't know," replied the boy, "I must think over it to-night and invoke the Great Spirit."

"You say well, my son," agreed the woman, and turning towards the bystanders, she said: "Come, leave him to himself; Tahko has a brave heart, he will find out what is best to be done."

II.

A Great Resolution.

Tahko passed a sleepless night. He thought and thought over and over again how he could set about trying to find his parents. Tears streamed down his cheeks and at one time he would call out half-aloud: "Father! mother!" Then again he would raise his eyes and hands towards the opening in the roof, through which the starry heavens could be seen, and pray to the Great Father above. When, at last day broke in the east, and the great bell of the Fort called both whites and Indians to work and to the fisheries, Tahko sprang up. His resolution was taken: he determined to go himself in search of his parents, but before quitting the hut he knelt on the floor, raised his hands and said, as Captain Oronzow had taught him: "Our father, dwelling up there in heaven, watch over me; turn away from me all that is bad, and help me to find my father!"

Then he hastened to the harbor to look for the captain, and when he reached the sea shore he found him already there with his sailors very busy unloading boxes and casks. He called out cheerfully to the boy: "Tahko, my lad, come and take the three barrels which belong to you, and take this box of ivory also which I will make you a present of. Take them to your father and mother and greet them kindly for me; I hope they are quite well?"

Tahko pressed the hand of the captain and said in a trembling voice: "Father Oronzow, my parents are no longer here."

"What!" exclaimed the captain in amazement, "no longer here? Are they dead?"

"No, they have gone back to their old home, because they thought I was dead; and, because the new white faces did not look upon them with friendly eyes."

"Come with me, my poor boy," said the captain, "you must tell me more about that." So saying, he drew the lad aside and seated himself with him on a log on the shore.

There Tahko informed his patron of all

that he had learnt from the Indians about the departure of his parents. Then he closed his narration with these words: "Yes, Father Oronzow, you spoke truly yesterday when you said, we must part, for I must go and search for my father and mother."

"Ah, but that was not what I meant," said the good-natured old Russian. "Now that you have lost your parents, stay with me, I will be a father to you, and so long as you are with me you shall not want for anything."

"Father Oronzow," said Tahko with a reproachful glance, "you yourself told me I must honor my father and mother, and always stay with them and take care of them and when they were old and helpless I must not forsake them, then the Great Father in heaven would love me and make me happy. You see, I *must* search for my parents."

The old seaman looked at the boy approvingly and said: "You are right, Tahko, and God will help you."

"Yes, I know He will," said Tahko, "for I promised the Great Father last night, if He helps me I will tell my father and

mother about the Lord Jesus, that they also may adore Him and be cleansed with the sacred water, and go to Him in heaven; for they know nothing about Him yet, and that is why I am so anxious to find them."

"But how do you hope to find them," interrupted Oronzow, "since you have no idea where they went to?"

"I think I shall find them by the Inana river; that is the native place of our tribe, and our old home is there."

"But, good God!" cried the captain, "that is a tremendous distance from here; you will be several months getting there."

"I know that," said Tahko, "but I am strong now."

"You had better wait till the fur dealers of the Yukon river go there," said the captain, "then you can accompany them."

"No, Father Oronzow," replied Tahko, "the fur dealers will be only looking for furs; but I shall be seeking my father. When the merchants have found sufficient furs they will turn back and compel me to carry their furs on my sledge. No, I must go alone."

"Ay, ay!" said the captain shaking his

head that is a perilous journey; I fear for your life."

"Father," replied Tahko, "you told me the Great Father in heaven sent an angel with glistening wings to the young Tobias, who showed him the way, saved him from the monstrous fish and cast out the black spirit. The Great Father will send me also a bright spirit with shining wings; but—" here Tahko stopped and glanced up at the captain with a questioning and imploring look.

The captain noticed it and said encouragingly: "Well, go on."

Tahko then continued: "I have no sledge and no dogs to go and seek my father with; will you buy me some?"

"Yes, my son," said Oronzow, "that I will and you shall have nine dogs and the best sledge I can find."

With these words Oronzow rose and accompanied by Tahko, went into the Indian village where dogs and sledges abounded. Tahko carefully examined the sledges and the harness for the dogs, and a bargain was soon concluded. Then Tahko took his vehicle to the forsaken hut of his parents,

shut it up there and the dogs with it, whilst he went with Oronzow to the ship to get guns, cartridges, knives, hatchets, saws, files, hammers, nails and other utensils, which are to the Indians treasures more precious than gold, because there is no iron or copper in the country. Oronzow had a lined fur cloak made for Tahko such as the Indians wear, and which the Indian women, who are clever at sewing, make themselves.

III.

A Fortunate Meeting.

Tahko had finished all his preparations and was only waiting for the first fall of snow to set out on his long journey. During this time he often sat very lonesome at the back of his hut, and cut and polished with a little blade of steel, or with a bit of glass, an ivory crucifix for the captain, praying meanwhile as follows: "Dear Father in heaven, bless Captain Oronzow and lead me to my parents." The old Russian, who was really sorry to part with the faithful, true-hearted youth, often came to keep him company for an hour or two.

At such times Tahko would say: "Father Oronzow, tell me something more out of the holy book (viz, out of the holy scriptures) and Oronzow would then tell him about Joseph in Egypt, or David, or about the miracles wrought by Our Lord, and he also taught him the ten commandments, the "Our Father." and the "Hail Mary;"

to all which instructions Tahko listened diligently.

Oronzow said on one of these occasions: "My son, I see you have a great longing to learn the prayers of the white men, but what will you do when you live in the Indian wigwams again, and the sorcerer of your tribe orders you to sing and dance at the feasts of the evil spirits? They will kill you if you do not obey them."

"Father," replied the boy earnestly, "I have had many thoughts in the last few days."

"Indeed," said Oronzow in astonishment, "what thoughts have you had?"

"I shall tell my brothers on the Inana everything which you have told me; I will lead them also on the right road to heaven and cleanse them in the sacred waters, but you must give me some of the water."

"What Tahko," cried the captain in amazement, "have you such great thoughts as these! Well, I never expected to make a prayerman (missionary) of you, but I am very pleased to hear it. *Only* instruct your brothers at first, then God will soon send

you a real prayerman, who will bring the sacred water with him."

A fortnight passed in this manner, when suddenly the weather changed. Heavy clouds covered the hitherto clear sky and an icy wind sprung up from the north. When Tahko went out of his hut on the following morning, there was half a foot of snow on the ground. Tahko went joyfully back, put on his fur mantle, fastened the snowshoes on his feet, took his dogs with him and went to look for the captain. He met him at the gate of the little fortress and cried out: "Father Oronzow, I must go away now to look for my parents."

"Yes, my son, replied Oronzow, holding out his hand to him, "yes, we must now part for ever in this life; but that you may never forget Father Oronzow, take this little present, it is a picture of the great Queen of heaven; when you are in any danger call to her, say: 'Mary help!' and pray sometimes for me."

"O Father Oronzow!" cried Tahko, looking with admiration on the picture painted on porcelain, of the Blessed Virgin, "I can never forget you." He then hung

the picture round his neck and hid it under his fur mantle.

In the meantime the sailors belonging to the whaling boat, had got the dogs harnessed to the sledge. They all crowded round Tahko, shook hands with him and wished him a prosperous journey. But the captain laid his hand, with almost paternal tenderness, on his shoulder and said: "Tahko, my dear son, persevere in well-doing and never forget the Blessed Virgin." Then he turned round and went away so as not to show how grievous the parting was to him. But Tahko, amidst the encouraging shouts of his friends, went off with his sledge through the village and on towards the east, the land of the rising sun.

As he strode along over the fields in his snow shoes, the dogs in their first eagerness ran on swiftly in advance, and the tower of the little fort of St. Michael disappeared behind him; his bosom heaved with a joyful feeling of regained freedom; for although he would willingly have stayed with Captain Oronzow, yet the ship was much too narrow and confined for him. He was still an Indian and he had been accustomed from

his earliest years to rove about and to hunt unhindered for hundreds of miles over hill and down dale, through wood and plain and on the banks of the lake. Consequently the life he led on the deck of the ship, where he could not go ten steps without meeting with some impediment, did not suit him. Now he was free again. He looked proudly on the rifle which hung across his shoulder and would gladly have tried it on some wild animal; but no snow-hare or ice-fox was to be seen. He thought with great satisfaction of all the treasures which lay hidden in his sledge. For Father Oronzow had given him six other weapons and a little barrel of cartridges, also a trunk filled with iron and steel tools, several bales of gay-colored cloth, a box filled with glass and china beads and a hundred other trifles.

Tahko looked upon himself as the richest man in all Alaska, and in his native place he would really be so, for many of the Indian chiefs even, who looked upon one poor miserable weapon as the most valuable possession in the world, would have envied him his treasures. Filled with joyful expectations, he thought how happy these gifts

would make his father and mother. But then again, the sad thought came into his mind, whether he should succeed in reaching his home safely and in finding his parents again. With bowed head and thoughtful mien, Tahko was sliding over the snowfields on the borders of a pine-wood, when he was suddenly and most unpleasantly awakened out of his reverie.

He felt himself struck by a heavy stone and he fell to the ground. Although somewhat stunned by the blow, still he felt at once for his rifle, sprang up quickly and looked all around to see where the missile came from. Scarcely thirty paces distant from him, he saw an Innoit hiding behind the trees with his sling stone in hand ready to hurl. Tahko instantly lifted his rifle and aimed at the breast of the man, who evidently must have been waiting about for him for several days with the intention of robbing him. Tahko would certainly have shot him through the heart, for, in his two years' practice of seal hunting, he had become a first rate shot, but the thought occurred to him: 'If I kill the man, he will go to the bad spirit's fiery lake, so I will not kill him,

but only hinder him from doing me any harm.' So he aimed at the Innoit's upraised hand, and just as he was about to throw his spear, the shot sounded and the man fell to the ground with a loud cry. The shot had gone through his hand. Tahko was just going to call his dogs back for they had run on some distance ahead, when he thought to himself, the man may be severely wounded and he might die here all alone in the snow. So he called the dogs back and stopped them, and then went cautiously towards the wounded man.

When the Innoit saw Tahko coming, he stretched out his bleeding hand towards him and said: "O pray don't kill me."

Tahko answered: "I will not kill you, because the Good Spirit forbids me to rob or kill my brethren. Cast your weapon from you and I will bind up your hand."

The savage looked at the boy with amazement, then threw his spear and the dagger which was stuck in his belt far away from him saying: "The Inana boys are nobler than the Innoits."

Tahko answered: "No, the Inanas rob and kill their fellow-men also; but I have

learnt the commands of the Great Father who forbids us to rob and kill others."

"And I," said the wounded Innoit, "have up to the present despised the white prayer-man. But I will go to him and learn from him."

Tahko, rejoicing over these earnest and sincere words of his enemy, ran to his sledge and fetched a little bottle of healing balsam and some linen which Captain Oronzow had given him, and bound the man's hand. Then he asked him whether he could walk and as the man answered in the affirmative, he gave him a little wine to strengthen him.

The Innoit got up, looked at the boy in astonishment and said: "I wanted to do you harm and you have done me good and given me good things. I will think over this."

Tahko then let him go on his way peacefully, whilst he continued his journey with his sledge. He had never felt so happy and joyful before in his life as he did after this good deed. He thought of Captain Oronzow who had narrated to him a similar history out of the holy book about a man of the

name of "Samaritan." He took care however to be more cautious than before, for, although in former times he had, like all the Indians, noticed every slight noise and readily discovered every distant object, still he had become careless on the ship where there was no danger of a sudden attack.

Towards evening the dogs being very tired, ran slowly and with their tongues hanging out of their mouths. So Tahko halted a little off the road between two sheltering rocks in the wood. He did not kindle a fire for fear its light might betray him. He unharnessed his dogs, tied them each one to a tree in a circle round the sledge, gave them each a dried fish to eat and then laid himself down on the sledge in their midst to sleep. But first he knelt down as Father Oronzow had told him, took out the picture of the Blessed Virgin, looked at it reverently and said: "Great Queen of heaven, protect me, bless Father Oronzow and lead me to my father and mother." Then he wrapped himself up in a large woolen covering and went to sleep. He dreamed he was on the ship and Captain Oronzow was with him. Then they both together

pulled a large whale from the sea up on to the deck. But when it was on the ship, Tahko saw that it was not a fish but a great coffin, and when he opened it, there lay within it his father and mother. Tahko much terrified rushed towards them, then they opened their eyes, and smiling upon him said: "Good-bye, Tahko, till we meet again in heaven." At these words he felt heart broken, uttered a piercing cry and woke up. He looked around him and saw the dogs peacefully sleeping under the snow. Then he tried to think what this dream could mean. He began to fear some misfortune must have overtaken his parents. So he rose up quickly and then kneeling reverently on the snow, drew forth his picture and prayed, saying the same words as he did the night before. After this he threw his dogs a piece of dried fish for their breakfast, ate a little himself and harnessed the dogs to the sledge again.

He now proceeded on his journey slowly but without interruption till towards noon he came near to the little fort of Nulato and saw the Indian village lying before him. He had now reached the great Yukon river,

along the shores of which he had several leagues yet to travel. But he resolved before he went any further, to enquire amongst the Indians of that village as to whether they chanced to know where his parents had gone. For on their way to the Yukon, they would have had to pass through Nulato, and so must have passed through this place also. He questioned several of the inhabitants whom he met; but nobody knew his parents, no one had seen them. Sad and depressed at the failure of his hopes, he was just about to leave the village when a dog rushed out of the last barrabarra (hut) and jumped up on him, barking joyfully and wagging his tail. Tahko looked with amazement at the dog who appeared to recognize him, then suddenly he cried: "Vasco! is it really you? Vasco, where is Takalag, find Takalag!"

But the dog, who really had belonged to the boy's father and who, in days gone by, would have obeyed such a command instantly by running to the precise place where his master was, now only stood still before Tahko and gave a melancholy howl.

At the same moment a white man with a

long beard and a black gown, came out of the hut and witnessed the incident. When he heard Tahko call the dog by his right name, he went forward and asked him in a friendly tone whether he knew the dog.

"Yes," replied Tahko, "I know him well; it is my father's dog, but where is Takalag, my father? If you know, please tell me for I am seeking him."

"Are you Takalag's son? How can that be? He told me his only child was drowned."

"No, no, we were all saved. But pray tell me where my father is! Does he live here?"

"No, my friend," replied the missionary —for such the stranger was—"your father is no longer here. Last year when he passed through this part on his way back to your native place on the Inana river, he spent the night in my barrabarra and I bought this dog Vasco of him because I wanted a good leading-dog for my sledge with which I travel all round about the Indian villages."

"Are you a fur-dealer then?" said Tahko.

"No, my son," said the missionary smiling, "I am not a hunter of skins, but a

hunter of souls. I am a missionary from the east."

Tahko was much astonished at hearing this, and he retreated a few paces half mistrustfully. Then he said timidly: "Are you a prayerman with a cross?"

"Most assuredly, see, here it is," replied the missionary drawing forth his crucifix and holding it up before the boy. Tahko was just going to take it and kiss it reverently when another doubt arose in his mind and he asked again: "Do you love the great Queen of heaven and her Son?"

"You mean the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God! Most certainly I do love and honor her with all my heart. Her picture is hanging there in my barrabarra. But why do you ask?"

"Because Father Oronzow told me I must be on my guard against the false prayermen of the Americans, who do not wear the cross and do not love the Queen of heaven; he says they do not know the right way to heaven. But you are one of the right prayermen and I can trust you."

"Well then, come into my hut and rest

till to-morrow; I must have a long talk with you, for I can see God has led you to me."

"Yes," said Tahko, "I have prayed every morning and night to the Great Father and asked Him to lead me to my parents, and now see, he has heard my prayers, for I have found traces of them."

"May God bless your entrance into my hut," said the missionary as he offered his hand to Tahko. Then opening the wide door of a little shed which was built by the side of the hut, he helped the boy to put his sledge in there, called the dogs into a little warm stable and throwing them some dried fish, closed the door.

Tahko was very much surprised at this amount of care, for the Indians leave their dogs outside the huts in the snow, or rather, they lie buried under the snow, and, when they are not at work, they generally have to find or catch their own food, which makes them very thievish; it is only when they are on a journey that their masters feed them once in the day — at night when they pitch their tents. But Tahko was even more surprised when the missionary took him into his hut. For, although it

was like all the Indian barrabarras only made of rough fir poles stopped up with moss and the bark of trees and covered with the skins of animals, yet it appeared much cleaner and brighter; for contrary to the Indian huts, it had on all sides except the north little window openings, which in default of panes of glass, were filled in with thick, but almost transparent, unscaled fish-skins.

One thing in particular called forth from the boy a loud cry of joy. A large picture of the Blessed Virgin with the Infant Jesus in her arms was hanging against the wall. Tahko recognized it immediately and cried out: "That is the same as Father Oronzow gave me!" and thereupon he showed his little picture to the missionary. The priest looked at it and said: "You are a Christian then, since Father Oronzow gave you that?"

"Yes," said Tahko, "I am a child of the Great Father. But Father Oronzow is not a prayerman, but the chief officer of a great ship." And then the boy told the priest how Oronzow instructed him when the ship was in danger of being dashed to pieces in the midst of the ice in the Polar Sea, and

how he asked him whether he believed in Jesus Christ and wished to go to heaven if he must die now. And when he answered these questions in the affirmative, Father Oronzow had baptized him.

IV.

Joyous Prospects.

Tahko informed the missionary that Father Oronzow told him about the Great Father in heaven and about His Son Jesus Christ, and then poured the sacred waters of baptism upon his head. And that he then felt a great joy in his heart, and had no longer the least fear of death, because he knew that he should be sure to go to heaven. Later on, when they were in safety, Father Oronzow told him a great many things out of the holy book and taught him the prayers. The missionary listened with great attention and inwardly praised the benign and wise providence of God, which had procured for this boy the grace of holy baptism by which his heart had been made capable of all good and of receiving the true faith. Of course Oronzow's instruction was rather imperfect, but he had not brought forward any prejudices against Catholic truth and so Tahko's

heart was still wholly unspoiled. Now God had led him, through the separation from his parents, into the hands of the priest that he might instruct him still better and perhaps make of him a useful worker for God. For, for some time past Father Martin—such was the name of the priest—had been seeking a young Indian who would accompany him on his missionary journeys and be useful to him in learning the language and customs of the people and in converting the natives. Tahko seemed to him to be exactly the right man. These and similar thoughts passed through the good Father's mind whilst he provided his guest with refreshment.

He sat down beside him and began in the following manner; "My son, call me in future Father Martin, for that is my name as a prayerman; and I should like to be a father to you as Father Oronzow was formerly. Your father told me your name last year, but I have forgotten it, what is it?"

"Tahko," replied the boy.

"What? Tahko! Did you not take some Christian name in baptism?"

"No, Father Oronzow said I must remain

an Indian so that I might be able to live amongst my people."

"Well, Tahko," continued the missionary "so you want to go and look for your parents on the Inana river?"

"Yes, Father."

"Suppose I were willing to accompany you there in my sledge, would you take me with you?"

"Take you with me!" cried Tahko in amazement, "what would you do there amongst the Inana men? They are very poor."

"I would make them rich with the grace of God and would teach them to pray to the Great Father."

"O Father!" cried Tahko springing up joyfully, "O Father! When my ears heard your words my heart rejoiced, for Father Oronzow told me God would send us a real prayerman and now I know that he told me true."

"Yes, my son," said the missionary with emotion,"Father Oronzow has been a real guardian angel both for you and for me."

"What," said Tahko in astonishment, "do you think Father Oronzow is an angel? But

he had a long beard like you and no shining wings."

The priest laughingly corrected the boy's mistake. Then he said: "For a long time past I have been wishing to visit the Indians on the Upper Yukon and on the Inana, and now that I have found a companion in you, we will set off together on the road early to-morrow morning."

Now it was a question of preparing themselves quickly for the journey. With Tahko's help Father Martin packed his boxes, which contained all the things necessary for saying holy Mass, as well as a great many presents for the Indians, on the two sledges. Then several boxes of dried fish, ship's biscuits, tea; also a little tent and a few woolen blankets. When everything was ready for the departure, Father Martin went to the American Governor of the fort and informed him that he was going to travel for several months in the interior of the country. After this, he told the Indians whom he had already converted that they were to meet together every day in his hut which served as the chapel, and say their prayers in common. In the

meantime night had come on, and they both laid themselves down on a bench to rest. But they first knelt before a picture of the Blessed Virgin and begged her blessing and protection on their journey. Tahko however prayed as usual saying: "Father in heaven, bless Father Oronzow and guide me to my parents." Then he laid himself down and fell off to sleep.

V.

Great Losses and Great Gains.

Tahko was awoke in the middle of the night by a bright light which shone all over the hut. He raised his head slightly and looked round. There he saw a table covered with a white cloth with two lighted candles on it, and the missionary standing before it with hands uplifted. At that sight a feeling of great awe and reverence came over the boy. He slipped noiselessly from his bed and knelt beside it. He remained thus quietly and attentively watching till the priest having finished the Mass, put all the sacred vessels away again.

When at length the missionary turned round and saw the boy, he said: "What, Tahko, are you awake already? Have you seen what I was doing?"

"Yes, Father," answered the youth.

"Do you know what it means?" said the priest.

"No, Father," replied Tahko.

"It is," said Fr. Martin, "the white man's service of God—the holy sacrifice which he offers up to the Great Father every day."

"Is it true, Father," said Tahko, "that no one dares look upon it, and have I done wrong in watching you?"

"No, my son," replied the missionary, "you may always look on when I offer up holy Mass; later on you will understand and will be able to assist me; and when we reach your home, I will offer up this sacrifice for the people of your tribe."

"Father," said Tahko, "when the Inana men see that they will have great reverence for you."

The missionary now placed the breakfast on the table, and an hour after they were ready to start on their journey. It was the 8th of September, the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, when our two travellers left Fort Nulato, the last of the European stations and pursued their way along the shore of the Yukon river. Tahko ran on before as leader of the first sledge and the dogs of both sledges followed, as they always do, with great exactitude in his

footprints in the snow. As they slid silently along over the undulating hilly country, nothing was to be heard save the panting of the dogs and the crashing of the frozen snow under the pressure of the sledges.

Towards evening the travellers came to a little Indian village, and were immediately surrounded by a group of women and children attracted by curiosity. Tahko told them his companion was a great prayerman of the white faces, and he had come to show them the way to happiness and to heaven, and the missionary added, he did not wish to buy fish or skins of them, but would make them presents if they would hear his words. The Indians gave signs of joy and applause and conducted the priest into the principal barrabarra, called *bajim*, a great roomy hut where the Indians held their meetings, kept their feasts and performed their death-dances. A thick bear's skin was stretched out on which the missionary was to sit, whilst the men on one side of the room and the women on the other, sat down on low rough benches. There was a fire burning in the middle of the hut, the smoke from which escaped through an

opening in the roof. Several kettles and caldrons were put near the fire — some with tea in, which Father Martin had brought with him and some with fish and meat to be cooked.

We must just stop and take a look at the Indian kettles for they are really very wonderful. They are made neither of iron nor copper, but of the bark of the birch tree sewed together, or of plaited rootlets. A kettle such as this holds water quite well, but it would burn if it were put over the fire. So they place it only by the side of the fire on the hot ashes and throw red-hot pebbles into the water till it boils. In spite of this apparently slow process, the water does not take much longer to boil than in a copper kettle. Plates and spoons are carved out of wood or stags' horns, hard sharp-ground stones are used as knives, only one being of iron or steel.

When the missionary drew out his own knife and fork, the Indians examined it closely and each one put it to his nose and said: "That is steel."

When Father Martin asked how they knew it was steel, he learnt that the Indians

can distinguish iron from steel by the smell. He gave them several other utensils, — scissors, hammers and nails — to try them and found they always said right. At last he handed them a silver coin, but they laughed and said: "That has no smell, but it is worth more than steel."

When the missionary had finished his supper in which the Indians also took part, he wanted to begin his instruction, but first he threw the remnants of fish and a few bones to the dogs, who with their heads resting on the ground lay before him and had watched him with hungry eyes all the time. They snapped them up greedily whilst a murmur of disapprobation arose all around. One Indian sprang up at once and snatched the bones away from one of the dogs. The missionary looked up at Tahko in astonishment, but he seemed as much shocked at the proceeding as the others. He whispered to the priest that it was unlucky to throw anything from one's own meal to the dogs and the Indians were convinced that the hunting and fishing expeditions would turn out badly.

The missionary who was not aware of

this superstition of the Indians, tried to make them understand that the lucky or unlucky results of their hunts could not depend upon that circumstance. But the savages were already in an ill-humor and an old sorcerer, who was afraid of losing his influence over them and consequently his means of subsistence, took advantage of their evil dispositions and tried to make them still more dissatisfied. When the missionary began to preach the gospel, the sorcerer contradicted him continually and said; the missionaries were the cause of all the Indians' sicknesses. Only one old Indian defended the priest and said: "Father, you have spoken truly and what you have said about the severe judgment after death, I have often thought and have also prayed to the Great Spirit. Stay with us and tell us more about your God, then all these also will believe."

At these words the old sorcerer became very angry and called out: "If the prayer-man speaks the truth, then he can also cure the sick man whom I have in my hut." With these words he hurried off and soon came back leading a man by the hand who

threw himself on the ground and writhed as though he were in great agony.

The old Indian whispered softly to the missionary: "The man is not ill; he is the sorcerer's brother and is only pretending to be ill."

"Can you cure him?" asked the sorcerer.

"No," answered the priest, "because he is not ill, but only an imposter like yourself."

"He is ill and I will cure him," said the sorcerer. Thereupon he threw a coverlet over the man and danced about singing and making superstitious signs. Suddenly he stooped down over him, put his hand under the coverlet and drew forth a hideous looking toad, crying out: "See, here is the spirit of the disease. I have taken it out of the sick man and he is now restored to health."

The man then sprang up from the ground and all the people present clapped their hands in token of applause. However there were several who laughed and made it evident that they looked upon the cure simply as a fraud, but they took care not to say so openly. Suddenly a dark form appeared through the opening in the roof

and every body looked up whilst something was let down by means of cords; it was a board on which stood, between two burning tapers, a little wood-carved reindeer.

"See," cried the sorcerer to the people, "this is a sign that the great spirit will make you prosperous in the hunt if you remain faithful to him." He then proposed that they should perform the hunt-dance around the carved image.

Whilst the Indians, with loud singing and stamping of feet, were going through this superstitious dance, the old Indian came up to the missionary and whispered: "Father, come out of the hut with me, the sorcerer means evil to you."

The priest rose at once and went out of the room. When they were outside, the old man took him by the hand and led him in all haste to the end of the village where Tahko, with the sledges ready harnessed, was anxiously awaiting him. The old man knelt down before the missionary and said: "Father, bless me and pray for me and my sons that we may soon have the happiness of seeing you again."

When Father Martin had blessed and

thanked the good old man, he strapped his snowshoes on and followed the sledges with which Tahko had already hurried forward. When he overtook the boy he asked him what danger had threatened them. Tahko replied: "O Father, that sorcerer is a bad man; they told me in the village that he and his brother had robbed and murdered several white men. I am very thankful that we have escaped them." They slid along in silence side by side over the hard frozen snow. Suddenly in the distance they saw a bright light in the sky, brilliant rays shot like fiery serpents out of the heavens and quite lighted up the surrounding neighborhood.

"The Northern Lights!" exclaimed the missionary.

"Father, is not that a sign that we are on the right road?" asked Tahko.

"My son," replied the priest, "he who has a good conscience and obeys God's will is always on the right road even when all is darkness, because God guides him and therefore he has nothing to fear."

"Father," said the boy, "I believe I have a good conscience, but still I am very sad."

"Why so my son?"

"Because I am afraid the sorcerers will prevent the Inana men from listening to you. Can you not offer up a sacrifice to the Great Father and ask Him to make all the sorcerers die?"

"No, my son," said the missionary, "on the contrary we will offer sacrifice to the good God that they may be converted."

"But I have nothing to offer as a sacrifice," said Tahko.

"Tahko," said the priest, "you can offer as a sacrifice what you hold as dearest and best."

"The dearest and best that I have is my father and mother," replied the boy, "but I cannot offer them as a sacrifice."

"You have a great longing to find them again have you not?" asked the priest.

"Yes, Father."

"Well now, if God willed that you should never find your parents again on earth, would not that be a very great and heavy sacrifice for you?"

"Oh yes, Father, it would be the greatest grief of all to me."

"Say every day in your prayers then, my

son: 'Dearest Lord, if Thou wilt that I should find my parents again, I should be grateful to Thee, but if it is Thy will that I should see them again only in heaven, then I offer Thee my deep sorrow for the conversion of the Inana tribe."

"What, Father," cried Tahko in amazement; "did you also see my dream?"

"What dream? my son," asked the missionary.

Thereupon the boy related his dream, how he had seen his parents in a coffin, and how they had called out to him: "Good-bye, till we meet again in heaven."

The missionary listened attentively to the boy's narration and then said: "My dear son, all dreams do not come from God, but He showed the innocent Joseph in Egypt the future in a dream, but pray every day as I told you."

"Yes, Father, I will do so," said Tahko and they then continued their journey thoughtfully and silently.

For several weeks they pursued their travels along the shores of the Yukon river without anything occuring worthy of note. They halted every evening and Tahko

lighted a fire after the manner of the Indians and cooked for the missionary and himself the only warm meal they had each day. Then they laid themselves down by the fire and covered themselves over with blankets, and, as they lay watching the Northern Lights, the priest instructed the boy in the Catholic Faith. Lastly they knelt down on the snow, said their prayers together and then slept till the icy cold wind awoke them and warned them that it was time they continued their journey. Tahko learnt the principal articles of the faith so quickly and so easily that Fr. Martin was astonished and said: "Tahko, I feel sure you will become a little missionary and help me to convert the Indians."

"But Father," said Tahko smiling rather sadly, "in that case I should be sure not to find my parents."

"As God wills, my son," said the priest.

For a few days the two travellers continued their way along the icy shores of the river where the road was smoother. Tahko went with the first sledge as leader, whilst the missionary, tired out with the long journey, seated himself on the last sledge.

Suddenly a snow-hare came out of its hole just in front of this last sledge and rushed across the frozen river to the opposite shore. The dogs belonging to the first sledge, not seeing the hare, continued their way quietly, but those belonging to the missionary's sledge made a sudden turn and followed the hare across the river. The priest threw his stick at the foremost dog to make him stop, but did not succeed in hitting him and it became impossible for him to stop the sledge. He called out loudly to Tahko for help. When the boy looked round he saw to his dismay how the priest's sledge, on the thin ice in the middle of the river, threatened to sink in; he was just beginning to fear both the sledge and the missionary would sink down under the water when the dogs reached the firmer ice again on the opposite shore and tearing up a little hill with the sledge, disappeared behind it.

Tahko was terribly shocked; he fastened his dogs securely to a tree and ran to the river in the hope of getting across, but that was impossible as the thin layer of ice was broken and was fast being carried away by the waves. He walked up and down the

shore, but nowhere could he find a spot strong enough to allow him to cross. Mournfully, indeed almost despairingly, he went back to his sledge trying to think what was to be done now. There a new surprise was in store for him. He found a swarm of strange Indians, who had fallen upon his sledge and were plundering its contents. When he drew near they called out to him in the language of the Inana men. He answered in the same tongue and made known that he was of the same tribe. Then the men said to him: "You have food in your sledge? give us something to eat, for we are starving."

Tahko now observed how frightfully emaciated the men were. They told him they had not been able to catch any wild animals for a long time past; their tribe had therefore separated, their wives and children were close by in the tents and Tahko must give them food also, otherwise they would die of hunger. Tahko understood now why God had led him this way, it was that he might save his fellow-countrymen from starvation. He hastened with them to the tent and distributed all

his remaining provisions of fish, meat and biscuits to the poor women and children, who kissed his hands in token of their gratitude. This action consoled Tahko very much. He recollected having seen marks of a great many reindeer's hoofs in the snow and he told the men so. But they answered despondently: "Ah, that cannot save us, for we have become so weak from our long starvation that we could not catch the swift reindeer by running as we used to do, and we have no fire-harpoons to kill them in the distance with."

"But I have some fire-arrows," said Tahko cheerfully, and he distributed some guns and cartridges amongst the astonished men and then led them back to the wood where he had seen the reindeer and they succeeded in killing thirty stags that same day, so they were no longer in fear of being starved. Whilst they were engaged bringing their booty into the camp, Tahko told them that he had had a white prayerman with him, but had lost him. The men then told him that half of their tribe was still on the other side of the river, and that the missionary with his sledge would have been

sure to find their camp, but they added that all the families that had remained behind were in a still worse condition than they, because the starvation they had endured had caused a terrible sickness to break out amongst them — many had died of it and Tahko's father and mother were now suffering from it.

At this news Tahko wept bitterly and praying said: "Merciful God, grant that Father Martin may find them and baptize them that they may obtain everlasting happiness."

Gladly would Tahko have swum across to the other side of the river to look for his parents, but it was utterly impossible to cross that rapid stream. He was obliged to wait till the river would be frozen over again in the fast increasing cold. In the meanwhile he related to his fellow-countrymen where he had been and what he had seen in the last two years, and he also instructed them in the doctrine of the white prayermen. They listened to him willingly and said: "What you tell us of the right road to heaven must be true for the God whom you adore led you along this way in

order to save us, we therefore believe your words."

At length after several days they ventured carefully over the frozen river and soon found the camp with the Indian families that had remained behind. As Tahko and his friends approached the village they saw a long procession of men and women coming out of it, and going towards a hill. First came a boy carrying a cross, then a number of Indians each holding a lighted torch in his hand, next came men bearing two coffins, behind which Tahko recognized the missionary, who dressed in his priestly garments, was walking along reciting prayers for the dead. With a loud cry the boy rushed up to him and embracing him said: "My father! my mother!"

"Yes, said the priest much surprised and greatly moved, "yes, my poor Tahko, they are your parents whom we are carrying to the grave, but I instructed them and baptized them before their death and you will meet them again in heaven."

Tahko weeping, but yet consoled, walked beside the missionary and took part in a Christian burial for the first time in his life.

In the evening when Fr. Martin and the boy were sitting together in the tent, the priest said: "You see, my son, great losses sometimes bring great gains. God has taken your parents away, but, at the same time, He has made you the savior of your tribe, and made the hearts of the Inana men capable of receiving the truth and now He intends to make a little prayerman of you."

"Yes, Father," said Tahko, "the good God has done all things well; I will always stay with you and help you to teach the Inana men the right road to heaven."

And now the story of Tahko the young Indian Missionary is at an end. He is still staying with Fr. Martin, helping him as a catechist with the Indian children; he also serves the holy Mass for him, and acts as leader in all the priest's journeys over the snow-fields of Alaska.

Third Tale.

Father René's Last Journey.

BY

Anton Huonder, S. J.

Father René's Last Journey.

The events narrated in this little story took place in the beginning of the present century.

In one of the bays of the White Swan Lake belonging to the territory of the great lakes, lay a dozen Indian wigwams half buried under the white mantle of winter. The hills which girdled the lake were also enveloped in snow, snow covered the vast water-plains, and snow remained on the wide-branched firs of the wood. A cold north wind sprang up from between the hills and whirled the thin flakes which fell from the heavens in a wild dance one over the other. In the midst of the wigwams there was a loghouse with a wooden cross on its snow-covered gable. It was the Mission chapel, and close by stood the dwelling-house of Father René who for ten years had lived and labored here in the territory of the source of the Mississippi among the tribe of Chippewa Indians. In this house a large fire was burning on the

hearth which threw its red flickering glare on an old Indian woman, who sat stirring a boiling caldron, snoring loudly the while.

That was Gegosasah, the grandmother, her name really signified "Wild Cat" but she was, in spite of her snoring, which proceeded from shortness of breath, a good, pious old woman who did the cooking for the Blackrobe and kept his house clean.

"Gegosasah," said Father René as he went out, "stir the tea well and when it has boiled sufficiently take it off and give the boy some of it every half hour, Manschaquita is very ill."

"Yes, yes;" murmured the old woman in reply, "Blackrobe may make his mind easy, Gegosasah loves the boy."

Who was Manschaquita? Manschaquita, "the little chief," was the son of Ompatonga, the "strong elk," and Monotawan, "the white hind," and grandson of Gegosasah. Manschaquita's mother died when he was six years old, and his father died when he was nine. When the father was dying he seized the Blackrobe's hand and laid it on the head of the boy saying: "Listen, Father, Ompatonga is going to the Great Spirit

above the clouds where he will find Monotawan again, but Manschaquita remains here. Take him, Blackrobe, he is yours."

And Father René took the poor orphan from that hour into his own house and stood in place of a father to him. Since that time which was now three years ago, a strong affection had taken root between the missionary and the boy; a kind of inspired reverence on the part of the young *protégé* and an almost paternal love on the part of the generous priest. Manschaquita had seen the winter's snow fall thirteen times. In the district of the White Swan Lake there were none of his companions of the same age who could catch him in the race, none who could equal him in shooting with bow and arrow, and none who could steer a little canoe so cleverly through rapid streams and foaming billows. The fine salmon which hung in the smoke-chimney, and indeed, most of the other fish which came to Father René's frugal table, were of Manschaquita's catching. But what was better than all this, was that the boy possessed a pious and innocent heart and a noble high aspiring mind.

"Could the son of a red man also become a Blackrobe?" he one day asked Father René during the religious instruction, and his black eyes shone brightly when the priest smiled on him and answered in the affirmative. Not to become a chief, but a Blackrobe was the end and aim of all Manschaquita's ambition.

For some days past a strong fever had stretched the boy upon his little moss-bed, and since the night before his condition threatened to become critical. In the morning Father René was sitting in great anxiety by the bed of his *protégé*, when two sick calls came quite unexpectedly. The zealous priest had stationed a confidential man in every little village and Indian encampment, whose principal duty was to inform him betimes when anyone was dangerously ill. Neither night nor heavy clouds, neither the fierce storms of winter nor any other danger could deter Father René—even if it were a hundred miles off—from rushing to the aid of his children when they were at the point of death. Indians have sharp eyes for recognizing

real sacrifices, and it was not without reason that they clung so much to their Blackrobe.

One of the messengers was Kratunka, the "Great Crow," from the village on the other side of the hills. "Thy daughter, Blackhair, is sick and longing to see the father of her soul," was the brief message.

The second messenger was, Teokunko, "the Swiftfoot," and he came from the other side of the lake where his father, an old chief, lay dying.

Father René resolved to go first to the old chief and then on his way back to seek out the dying maiden. He took his thick cloak and beaver cap down from the wall, hurridly drew on his mocassins and warm well-lined gloves, hid the holy oils in his breast pocket and the little pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament in his bosom, seated himself on his sledge and went off over the smooth icy plain.

Wapekesuk, the "White Cloud," the old man was called who was at the point of death. He was once a powerful chief; but now the cold hand of death was upon him and for some hours he had ceased to show any signs of life so the Indian women who

were standing about his bed wrapped up in woolen blankets, did not know whether his spirit had flown or not. Then suddenly a slight tremor passed over the sunken, withered countenance, the eyes opened wide and turned towards the door. At the same moment Father René entered, approached the bed, bent over the dying man compassionately, seized with a friendly pressure his benumbed and stiffening hands in his own.

"It is well," murmured Wapekesuk in the deep gutteral language of his tribe, "the White Cloud knew he should see the Father once more."

The missionary sat down by his side and affectionately spoke words of consolation and peace to his listening ear, strengthened him with the holy oils and administered to him the Blessed Sacrament. A pressure from the trembling, dying hand thanked the good priest for this last good deed.

At the door of the hut stood Walla, the Mestizo and urgently entreated the missionary to go to his old mother who was dying. The way was long and the afternoon was already far advanced when

Father René on his way back from this second errand of mercy looked in once more on the old chief to give him a last farewell. He found him unconscious and knelt down to recommend the departing spirit to God; he had just risen from his prayer and was going away when the dying man opened his eyes and raised himself right up on the bed. It was as if for a moment his full strength had returned to him, for he took both the priest's hands in his own, and with a strong voice and beaming eyes said: "The Father must not go back over the lake to-day. I hear a voice; it says he must not go."

"Why not," said Father René. "The Blackrobe has done all he can for the dying chief."

"Wapekesuk is not thinking of himself," answered the old man, "he is thinking of the Father whose life is precious. Listen, Blackrobe, listen, how the wind blows; the spirit of the storm is riding on the clouds. Stay!" The last words faded away on the lips of the dying man, the light went out of his eyes, and the icy fingers loosened their grasp. Father René took the sinking form

in his arms and let it slip gently down again on the bed. Wapekesuk's spirit had flown in the very moment he had pronounced the warning word.

The missionary remained a little while longer, comforted those who were left behind, blessed the corpse and then set out bravely on his road home, intending to visit the sick maiden on the way.

"Father," said the eldest son of the dead man "be attentive to the words of the dying red man and stay the night in our wigwam."

"I cannot, I must go on," said Father René, "Blackhair is calling for the Father and cannot die without him. Can I leave her to die forsaken?"

"Look, Father, how the snow flakes are falling thicker and thicker; the storm is coming from the hills it will overtake you. O Father, *do* stay!"

Father René broke away from him and hurried off in the direction of the lake, followed by the Indians who all pressingly besought him to stay, for the first howling shock of a fearful snow storm came over the lake. "Silence, children, it must be so; my duty calls me. God will protect me."

The dogs began to whine. Sambo, the draught-hound, a strong powerful beast, pointed his ears as if listening to some distant sound, and looked up questioningly at his master with his bright, intelligent eyes. Father René dismissed the anxious Indians who wanted to accompany him even against his will. The whip cracked; the sledge flew swiftly as an arrow over the smooth-swept plains, and in a few minutes disappeared in the thick veil of the whirling snow flakes.

Manschaquita lay ill, very ill on his little bed. Gegosasah still sat snoring by the fire holding her bony yellow hands over the embers. "Gegosasah, when will Father René come back?" said Manschaquita. He had been in a high fever for several hours and during his delirium he groaned heavily and said strange things. The old woman thinking he was still raving only shook her grey head and muttered to herself.

"Gegosasah," repeated the boy, "when will Father René come back?"

"Hush, hush," replied the old woman, "Father René will not be back to-day."

"But he promised me when he went out that he *would* come back to-day."

"Gegosasah says he will not come."

"Why not, dear Granny?"

"Because the storm is too heavy; the sharp wind lashes the dogs. Do you hear it howling? The Blackrobe is wise, he will wait till morning. But Manschaquita must sleep not talk," added she breaking off abruptly.

The boy was quiet. "The little chief sleeps," muttered the old woman, "that is good." Then she got up and went out of the room; she was no sooner gone than the boy raised himself up and anxiously bending forward into the stormy night listened in the hope of catching the sound of the bell of the approaching team, or the crashing of the snowshoes on the frosty plain. Gradually he sank down exhausted on his little bed and fell into a light sleep, out of which however he was soon awoke by the raging of the storm which now began to rave with the utmost violence. The wind howled all round the loghouse and whistled fearfully through all its cracks and crevices, like a pack of wolves. Sounds as if of cries of

rage, of scornful laughter, angry tumult, and of agony, all these mingled together formed that most dismal and unearthly night concert of a northern winter-storm.

The boy listened breathless and with a throbbing heart and feverish pulse; an inexplicable fear and anxiety had seized upon him. Then all at once — hush! that was Sambo's bark, the strong hollow bark of the Esquimaux dog. Manschaquita could have distinguished the voice of his favorite from among a hundred others. In the greatest excitement the boy strained his sharp sense of hearing to the utmost in order to catch the sound which at the same time awoke hope and fear. But hark! there again — but this time the bark passed into long-drawn piteous howls and whining which appeared to die away more and more in the distance. What in the name of heaven could it mean? Why did not the sound come nearer? Why did it sound so pitiful as if in a death-agony? Was Father René in any danger? With a cry of distress the boy sprang from the bed and tried to go out and make known the danger and summon the men to the rescue. But a

faintness came over him and, as if caught in a whirlpool, he sank down on his bed unconscious.

Several hours passed. Gradually the storm outside abated. Over head wild, ragged black clouds still chased each other in the heavens. The moon rose behind the mountains. It was midnight. The silvery light of the peaceful stars shone on branches of the ice-covered ancient firs. In the distance sounded the howling of wolves and from the neighboring lake the mysterious cracking of the ice was to be heard. What was that out there on the brightly illuminated plain near the bank of the lake? It looked like a heap of snow in the shape of a grave and out of the snow there was here an arm and there the edge of a black garment. Close by lay outstretched a strong, powerful dog keeping watch and pointing his ears to listen in the direction of the wood from whence came the howling of the wolves.

How long Manschaquita had lain unconscious he knew not, but when he opened his eyes again he found himself in bed in a brightly-lighted little room. The half-

burned pine logs on the hearth had fallen one on the other, and a tongue-shaped flame rose high out of the embers causing for a few moments so bright a light that all the objects in the room could be plainly distinguished, above all, however, a tall, slim priestly form with a fine shaped brow framed round with long locks of hair, was to be seen kneeling by the bed-side praying.

Just then he looked up and Manschaquita gave a cry of joy, for it was no other than Father René himself with his pale, beautiful countenance and his large, dark eyes which with and indescribable expression of goodness and love rested on the boy. "Dear Father, when did you come?" exclaimed the boy joyfully and stretched out his arms which still trembled with the weakness from the fever. At that moment the flame sank on the hearth and the form disappeared with a last kind gesture. Was it a dream or was it reality? Manschaquita did not know. Filled with wonder he rubbed his eyes and stared about on all sides in the half-obscured room. Nowhere was there any trace of Father René.

"Am I awake or am I dreaming?" The

boy asked himself. He was wide awake, for he heard the wind outside, which still softly shook the doors and windows and he saw plainly as the flame flickered anew, the little crucifix on the wall which Father René had carved, the three-bright-colored pictures of saints which hung here and there, the low stool with the otter-skin where he used to sit by the fire and the mocassins which hung near the fire to dry. Whilst he was wondering and wondering and the thoughts were all jumbled together in his feverish brain he sank unconsciously back on his bed again and fell off to sleep and only awoke when the red rays of the winter sun glimmered through the little window, and the murmuring of half-muffled voices from without fell upon his ear. Amongst the hard gutteral voices of his tribesmen, he heard the soft, gentle tones of a European.

But it was not the voice of Father René. He would never hear that again. Manschaquita could not distinguish what was said and felt himself too weak to get up. And it was fortunate for him that it was so, or the blow which awaited him might have struck him too suddenly and perhaps killed him.

At the open door of the little Mission chapel stood a group of Indians and Half-breeds who, wrapped up in their bright-colored woolen blankets and furs were whispering softly to one another and pointing repeatedly to the open door in a significant manner. There in the chapel a venerable priest with snow-white hair was bending over a dead body which lay in a roughly-made open coffin at the foot of the altar. Who was the priest and who was it that was dead?

The priest was Father Gascon, the pastor of the nearest Opaschkwa-Mission — eighty miles off — who came once or twice every year to visit Father René. Yesterday's storm had compelled him to stay the night in a camp a few miles off. This morning he came on to visit his dear friend and colleague. Who can describe his grief when he met the procession bearing the stiffened corpse along by the lake? Teokunko, the eldest son of the "White Wolf," who passed away to the Great Spirit yesterday, and his men had found the corpse. With great care they had searched for their beloved Father whose apostolical zeal had drawn

him out in the storm. The uncertainty as to the fate of the missionary had left the faithful red skins no rest. In the very early morning they went out to the lake and found to their intense grief the frozen corpse and the whining dog, which was still living.

"Come, Blackrobe," said Teokunko to Father Gascon as he approached the spot with tears in his eyes, "come, I will show you how Father René died."

Father Gascon knew the wonderful instinct of the Indians and followed his leader silently accompanied by a troop of Indians and Mestizos who wanted to see what had happened to their Father. They went first to the other side of the lake and then came back by the way which Father René had taken. Now Teokunko began to display that wonderful, sharp sense which nature and long usage give to the sons of the wilderness in such an extraordinary degree.

He followed with an almost incredible exactitude the tracks which to the inexperienced eyes of the European, seemed wholly obliterated by the storm-winds, he depicted all the details of the misfortune as intuitively

and with as great a precision as if he had seen it all with his own eyes.

"Here the Blackrobe disappeared from our sight," then, after following the faint marks silently for nearly an hour, he stood still and pointing to the ground said: "Here the Father stopped and turned his back for the first time to the violence of the storm."

The other red skins looked closely at the spot and nodded approvingly.

"Here," went on Teokunko in a most reverential tone, after having gone on from twenty to thirty paces, "here, our Father knelt down to pray."

The young Indian sank on his knees and kissed the spot of which his sharp eye pointed out the traces. This made a deep impression on the bystanders and the savages who are ordinarily so very indifferent, muttered the "Haua," their expression of sympathetic admiration. Teokunko raised himself up in order to continue his graphic description. The traces went now in a confused zigzag. Here began the struggle for life; the struggle of a strong, vigorous God-trusting soul with the wild power of the elements, was here

delineated in ice and snow in transient, half-mixed marks. But Teokunko read them as an adept reads an old, nearly obliterated manuscript. Here the Father fell again, scrambled up and pressed on again. But the raging whirlwind was too strong for him. Shorter and shorter became the steps by which he fought his way inch by inch. — There is the spot where he fell down never to rise again. Extreme exhaustion and the icy wind which blinds the eyes, chokes the breath, penetrates into the very marrow of the bones and stagnates the blood in the veins, had at last conquered his brave and devoted heart. Here, in the morning, Teokunko and his companions found the corpse already stiff and as white as marble, with the hands folded on the breast as if in prayer and the beautiful countenance peaceful and undisfigured in spite of his terrible death, turned towards heaven where his last pious thoughts were directed.

It was a most impressive moment. Father Gascon and his companions stood for a few moments in silence and their lips moved as they softly breathed a prayer. Then the

men went back to the little village and entered the chapel where the poor Indians had already streamed in on all sides to look once more on the dead body of their beloved pastor. Never more would those stiffened hands dispense to them the Bread of Life, never again would those lips now blanched in death speak to them of the Great Spirit. The career of the apostle was finished. He had been cut off in the prime of life — a victim to his great zeal and faithfulness to duty. Two days later his remains were consigned to earth on the little hill by the banks of the lake. A large, old fir tree stands near his grave and a high wooden cross points out to the sons of the wilderness from a long distance off, the place where their Father has found his last resting-place.

It was quite a providential circumstance that Father Gascon happened to come into the village just at that time, for he was able to comfort the poor sorrowing Indians and he took the pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament with great reverence from the bosom of the deceased and bore the heavenly Guest to the dying girl whose appeal for

help had decided Father René on risking such a perilous journey.

It was Father Gascon also who informed the sick boy in the most careful manner of the death of the dear friend and benefactor whom he loved with all the ardor of his most noble and grateful heart. "He is gone, Manschaquita, where no winter storms rage, but an eternal spring smiles, where he is with the Great Spirit eternally and infinitely happy. From thence he looks down on Manschaquita like a star of light and reminds him to keep true to the holy faith which he taught him." Poor child, he sadly needed consolation!

Twelve years later when the summer sun was shining on the crystal-bright mirror of the White Swan Lake, when all around the woody heights were green again, and forests and ravines re-echoed with the joyful shots of the young warriors, the first Blackrobe out of the tribe of the Chippewas made his entrance into the valley and proceeded to the village. That was Manschaquita, the young chief.

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